

**To** Planning & Regulatory Committee  
**By:** Planning Development Manager

**Date:** 29 May 2024

**District(s)** Mole Valley

**Electoral Division(s):**

Dorking Hills  
Mrs Watson

**Case Officer:**  
David Maxwell

**Purpose:** For Decision

**Grid Ref:** 515919 149902

**Title: Minerals and Waste Application MO/2023/1833**

**Land at Dorking West Station Yard, Ranmore Road, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1HW**

**Retention of a materials recycling facility including a building for the bulking up and processing of mixed skip waste, an office / welfare facility, storage units, skip storage, entrance gates and installation of an acoustic fence (part retrospective)**

**Summary Report**

Land at Dorking West Station Yard is situated around 280 metres (m) west of Ranmore Road and 170m east of Dorking West Station on the edge of the built-up area in north-west Dorking. It is bounded by a private access track to the north, beyond which lies a sand school, stables and a residential dwelling, an end-of-life vehicle facility to the east, the North Downs Line to the south and a car body repair shop to the west. A Primary School is situated around 180m to the east on the north side of the private access track. The application site covers an area of 0.27 hectares (ha) which includes a long private access track off Ranmore Road.

The site includes a small yard with an area of 0.13 ha which contains an unauthorised waste materials recovery facility (MRF). It is currently being used to import, sort, process, bulk up and store skip waste material, containing a mixture of primarily construction, demolition and excavation (C,D&E) waste and an element of household waste, prior to removal off-site.

Part of the application site, in respect of a section of the proposed access track, is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Surrey Hills National Landscape (SHNL), formerly known as the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) are located immediately to the west of the application site. The site is situated within the Upper Greensand which is classified as a principal aquifer and within ground water Source Protection Zone 2.

The acoustic fence has yet to be installed. There is also a large quantity of miscellaneous equipment on the site which is not included as part of the application and would need to be removed. The application involves the importation of up to 7,500 tonnes per annum (tpa) of skip waste material comprising around 7,125 tpa of C,D&E waste.

Having assessed the planning merits of the application, Officers are satisfied that the proposal complies with relevant local development plan policies in relation to waste management, landscape and visual impact and ecology and biodiversity.

Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) and the District Council Environmental Health Officer (EHO) have expressed serious concerns regarding the proposed access arrangements and highway safety. The County Highway Authority and the Environment Agency have recommended that the application be refused on access and highway safety grounds and due to the risk of pollution to controlled waters respectively. Further, the district council EHO has advised that the impact of intrusive noise on the nearby sand school and stables is unacceptable and the County Air Quality Consultant has requested the submission of a Dust Management Plan and further air quality information which remains outstanding. A total of 139 letters of representation and two petitions have been received, all of which object to the application, primarily in relation to highways, traffic and access, noise and air quality including dust.

As the application site is partially located in the Green Belt, the application comprises inappropriate development in the Green Belt which should only be approved in 'very special circumstances'. Having identified the harm that the development would cause to the openness of the Green Belt together with any other harm, Officers do not consider that there are sufficient very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.

Taking these considerations into account, Officers consider that the proposed development is unacceptable and is contrary to the requirements of national planning policy and local development plan policy requirements.

**The recommendation is that planning permission is REFUSED.**

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## ***Application details***

### ***Applicant***

Surrey Recycling Services

### ***Date application valid***

23 November 2023

### ***Period for Determination***

22 February 2024 (Extension of time agreed until 12 June 2024)

### ***Amending Documents***

- Email entitled, "J004523: Planning Application SCC\_Ref\_2023-0112 - Dorking West Station Yard, Ranmore Road" dated 22 January 2024
- Revised Application Form dated 22 January 2024
- Drawing No. J004523-DD-03 Rev D As Existing Site Plan dated 19 January 2024
- Drawing No. J004523-DD-01 Rev C Site Location Plan dated 19 January 2024
- Email entitled, "J004523: Planning Application SCC\_Ref\_2023-0112 - Dorking West Station Yard, Ranmore Road" dated 29 January 2024
- Drawing No. 2308071-02 Visibility Splays at Southern Access dated 25 January 2024
- Drawing No. 2308071-TK07 Swept Path Analysis at Southern Access (9.57m Tipper) dated 25 January 2024
- Email entitled, "RE: J004523: Planning Application SCC\_Ref\_2023-0112 - Dorking West Station Yard, Ranmore Road" dated 1 February 2024

- Drawing No. J004523-DD-04 Rev E As Existing Site Plan showing Acoustic Fence dated 6 February 2024
- Email entitled, "RE: J004523: Planning Application SCC\_Ref\_2023-0112 - Dorking West Station Yard, Ranmore Road" dated 7 February 2024
- Drawing No. EHP 01 Eco.Enhancement Plan dated February 2024
- Arboricultural Method Statement, David Archer Associates, dated February 2024

## Summary of Planning Issues

This section identifies and summarises the main planning issues in the report. The full text should be considered before the meeting.

	Is this aspect of the proposal in accordance with the development plan?	Paragraphs in the report where this has been Discussed
Waste Management	Yes	52-61
Highways, Traffic and Access	No	62-78
Air Quality	No	79-88
Noise	No	89-107
Landscape and Visual Impact	Yes	108-134
Ecology and Biodiversity	Yes	135-144
Water Environment	No	145-155
Green Belt	No	156-170

## Illustrative material

### Site Plan

Plan 1 - Site Location and Application Site Area

### Aerial Photographs

Aerial 1 - Surrounding Area  
 Aerial 2 - Application Site

### Plans & Drawings

As Existing Site Plan Showing Acoustic Fence

### Site Photographs

- Figure 1: View from Ranmore Rd of Site Access Track to the Left and School Entrance to the Right
- Figure 2: View from Access Track looking South along Ranmore Rd
- Figure 3: View from Access Track looking North along Ranmore Rd
- Figure 4: View from Ranmore Rd looking West along Access Track
- Figure 5: View looking West along Access Track towards the MRF
- Figure 6; Application Site Entrance
- Figure 7: View looking East from SHNL towards rear of MRF Building
- Figure 8: View of MRF Building looking West
- Figure 9: Trommel used to Process Imported C,D&E Waste
- Figure 10: View of Yard and MRF Building looking West
- Figure 11: View of Yard looking East towards Site Entrance

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## **Background**

### **Site Description**

1. The application site is situated on the edge of the built up area in north-west Dorking which comprises an historic market town. It is located around 170m west of Dorking West station and 280m west of Ranmore Road. It covers an area of 0.27 hectares (ha) which includes a long private access track off Ranmore Road that constitutes a no through road.
2. The site includes a small yard with an area of 0.13 ha which contains an unauthorised waste materials recovery facility (MRF). It is currently being used to import, sort, process, bulk up and store skip waste material, containing a mixture of primarily construction, demolition and excavation (C,D&E) waste and an element of household waste, prior to removal off-site.
3. The entrance to the site is located in the north-east corner of the yard. Two-thirds of the application site has a concrete base. The western end of the site contains a waste processing building. This has an open frontage, partly open sides and a concrete floor. The building contains a trommel and stockpiles of waste materials. In front of the building is an unloading area for imported waste materials. The site also contains a two-storey portacabin incorporating office, welfare and storage facilities, a quarantine storage bay, skip storage, large metal containers, two JCB excavators, a forklift truck, a number of scrap vehicles and other miscellaneous equipment.
4. The site has a solid fence along its southern perimeter. Solid metal fencing surrounds part of the northern site boundary extending westwards from the site entrance gates. Beyond this, the northern boundary is enclosed by a chain link fence. Green tarpaulin has been erected around part of the site perimeter. This is torn in places and has a number of holes with some sections having partly collapsed. A number of trees are situated immediately beyond and along the length of the southern site boundary and a mix of trees and hedgerow are located along parts of the northern boundary of the site.
5. The application site borders a car body repair shop to the west and an end-of-life vehicle (ELV) facility to the east. The ELV facility benefits from a certificate of lawful use. This facility is owned and operated by LJC Autospares Ltd who are also the landowners of the main yard which forms part of the application site. An equestrian centre lies to the north of the application site on the opposite side of the private access track. This comprises a sand school which lies 25 metres to the north of the proposed MRF, beyond which are a stables and residential dwelling. The North Downs line is situated immediately to the south of the site, beyond which is an industrial estate containing a number of commercial premises.
6. A car parking area, Conifer Park Gypsy and Traveller site, Ranmore Road Allotments, the Dorking Community Orchard and Ranmore BMX and Mountain Bike Park all lie to the west of the sand school and on the northern side of the private access track from which they are served. Saint Martin's Church of England Primary School is situated around 180m to the east of the application site on the opposite side of the private access track with the school playing field being around 30m distant at its nearest point. Public Footpath 67 is located opposite the junction between Ranmore Road and the private access track which leads to the application site.

7. Two parallel private access tracks a very short distance apart lead west from Ranmore Road in the direction of the application site. The private access track to the north is owned and maintained by Mole Valley District Council (MVDC). This passes the access to the school and continues westwards past the northern boundary of the ELV facility towards the application site and equestrian centre, and the car body repair shop, parking area, Gypsy and Traveller site, allotments, orchard and bike park beyond.
8. The private access track to the south is owned by LJC Autospares Ltd. At around 110m in length, this access track is much shorter and only serves the ELV facility. The owner has allowed parents to use this access at school drop-off and pick-up times provided they do not block vehicles from accessing and egressing the ELV facility. Just to the north of the entrance to the ELV facility, this access track merges with the private access track to the north. At this point, it is possible for vehicles to join the private access track to the north owned by MVDC and turn left in the direction of the application site or right in the direction of Ranmore Road past the school access road. During the site visit undertaken by Officers, it was noted that vehicles were currently using the northern private access track to access the application site from Ranmore Road.
9. The application site is partly located within the Metropolitan Green Belt as a 133m section of the northern private access track within the application site boundary is designated as Green Belt land. The Surrey Hills National Landscape (SHNL), formerly known as the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) border the application site immediately to the west. Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies around 1,900m to the north-east and Hackhurst and White Downs Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) is situated 500m to the north-west.
10. The site is situated within the Upper Greensand which is classified as a principal aquifer and within ground water Source Protection Zone 2. It also lies within Flood Zone 1 and has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea.

### ***Planning History***

11. The County Planning Authority has no planning history for the site which is the subject of an open enforcement investigation. The relevant planning history referred to in the submitted Planning Statement has been checked and found not to relate to the application site. However, the applicant has subsequently explained that the application site has been in existence for the last 40 years. During the 1980s and 1990s the application site was being used by a skip company. The site was subsequently used as a scrap yard until the applicant arrived at the site in 2020 and began operating a recycling service involving the receipt of skip waste. In April 2022, a license was obtained from the Environment Agency and the applicant began operating the MRF.

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### ***The proposal***

12. The part-retrospective application is for the retention of a MRF including a building for the bulking up and processing of mixed skip waste, a two-storey office/welfare facility, storage units, skip storage, entrance gates and the installation of an acoustic fence. The application is part retrospective because the existing layout differs from that shown on the submitted drawings and the acoustic fence has yet to be installed.

13. The proposal involves the importation of up to 7,500 tonnes per annum (tpa) of skip waste material. The applicant states that this comprises around 7,125 tpa of C,D&E waste. On arrival, the waste material would be unloaded onto a concrete base in a designated area in front of the waste processing building. The waste would be processed by being fed into a trommel where it would be separated into different waste streams including hardcore, wood, plastics, plasterboard and scrap metal. The waste material would then be stored in 6 x 40 and 20 yard skips before being collected and removed off-site for recycling at other specialist licenced treatment sites.
14. A 13 tonne JCB excavator would be used to load the waste into the skips and lorries. The machinery would remain at the site overnight and would be used throughout the site operating hours with the exception of Saturdays when no noisy works would take place. In the event that hazardous materials are brought onto site, the materials would be disposed of using the appropriate procedures and the local planning authority advised accordingly.
15. To prevent the spread of dirt and debris onto the public highway, all vehicles accessing the site would be inspected and, if necessary, their wheels cleaned before leaving the site to access the public highway. In the event that mud is spread on the public highway, this would be cleaned using a road sweeper.
16. The proposed waste processing building would be 9.8m in length and 9.8m wide. The roof would slope downwards from a height of 7.8m at the front of the building to 6.3m at the rear. In this respect, the submitted rear elevation drawing is incorrect as it indicates that the roof would be 7.8m in height at the rear of the building. The building would be open at the front and partially open on either side. The wall along the rear elevation of the building would also extend partly along the length of the side elevations and is coloured pale green. The applicant states that the corrugated roof panels and frame would be made from Corten / weathering steel and would be painted grey. The proposed unloading area for waste processing would be located directly in front of the waste processing building and measures around 9.8m in length and 7.5m in width.
17. To the west of the unloading area, a quarantine storage bay (3m by 4.5m) and six x 40 and 20 yard skips are proposed to be sited along the northern site boundary with a concrete slab (3.7m by 4.4m), with concrete blocks to the rear, on which to park the 13 tonne excavator, a two storey portacabin and 4 cycle parking spaces to be sited along the southern site boundary. A total of 5 car parking spaces would be provided at the eastern end of the site close to the site entrance.
18. The proposed two-storey portacabin is to be used for the storage of controlled substances, diesel oil and personal protective equipment on the ground floor and as an office and welfare facility on the upper floor. The building would be 4.7m in height, 9.5m in length and 2m in width. An exterior staircase positioned at the western end of the building would provide access to the upper level. The portacabins would comprise corrugated wall panels and frame made from Corten weathering steel which would be painted blue.
19. The site would have metal entrance gates and a 1.8m board fence along the southern boundary. A 3m high acoustic close boarded fence is proposed to be erected along the northern boundary of the site with a 2m high close boarded acoustic fence (with an overall height of 4m) proposed on top of the existing building on the northern section of the site's western boundary. This would be positioned in order to line up with the existing barrier behind the trommel which is located towards the front of the waste processing building.

20. Access and egress to the site is proposed using the southern private access track between Ranmore Road and the entrance to the ELV facility and the northern private access track between the ELV facility entrance and the application site. This would ensure that development related traffic avoids passing the access road serving the nearby primary school.
21. All deliveries would be pre-booked in advance and allocated set arrival times. Suppliers would be required to call the office a minimum of 20 minutes before their vehicle arrives at the site to confirm that the loading area is available. If loading space is unavailable, vehicles would be turned away and given an alternative delivery time. Deliveries to the site would generally take place outside the peak hours on the highway network. Where possible, deliveries would be scheduled to distribute vehicle movements throughout these hours and to avoid more than one vehicle delivering to the site at any one time.
22. All heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers and visitors to the site would be made aware of the access and egress route and of the parking restrictions in the vicinity of the site prior to undertaking their journey. A written briefing and plan for the site would be provided to drivers and visitors.
23. The proposed MRF would employ 9 full-time staff. It would operate between 0900 and 1700 hours Monday to Friday and between 0900 and 1600 hours on Saturday. During the winter months, it is proposed that the site would only be used between 1530 and 1700 hours for the packing up of equipment and cleaning as no external lighting is proposed.

## ***Consultations and publicity***

### ***District Council***

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| 24. | Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) | Has serious concerns over the appropriateness of the access to the site which is owned and maintained by MVDC.            |
| 25. | Environmental Health Officer        | Considers the application to be unacceptable on the grounds of highway safety and servicing, pedestrian safety and noise. |

### ***Consultees (Statutory and Non-Statutory)***

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|-----|-------------------------------|---|
| 26. | County Highway Authority      | Has assessed the application on safety, capacity and policy grounds and recommends the proposal be refused.   |
| 27. | County Noise Consultant       | Has a number of concerns relating to the assessment of noise including the assessment of cumulative noise impact.   |
| 28. | County Air Quality Consultant | Represents an appropriate use of the land in air quality terms and the impacts on the surrounding area would not be significant. Recommends the provision of further information including the submission of a Dust |

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|     |                                   | Management Plan.   |
| 29. | Lead Local Flood Authority        | No comments as there is no change to the impermeable area or existing surface water drainage system.   |
| 30. | Environment Agency                | Object and recommend that planning permission be refused.  |
| 31. | Thames Water                      | No views received.   |
| 32. | SES Water                         | Express concern over the impact on ground water quality.   |
| 33. | County Landscape Officer          | The proposal would not result in an Unacceptable level of harm subject to the imposition of conditions.  |
| 34. | SHNL Planning Adviser             | Is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and the Surrey Hills Management Plan.  |
| 35. | County Arboriculturist Officer    | No objection.  |
| 36. | County Ecological Officer         | No concerns regarding nesting birds, roosting bats or the proposed ecological enhancements.  |
| 37. | Minerals and Waste Policy Team    | Broadly supportive of the proposal whilst recognising that it would not make a significant contribution to waste capacity requirements.  |
| 38. | Network Rail                      | No views received.   |
| 39. | Health and Safety Executive       | Proposal does not lie within the consultation distance of a major hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline.   |
| 40. | County Councillor - Dorking Hills | Application should be refused due to the noise impact on the sand school, unless significant noise conditions are imposed, the inadequate access and the damage to the private access track. |

### ***Parish/Town Council and Amenity Groups***

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| 41. | Wotton Parish Council | No views received. |
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### ***Summary of publicity undertaken and key issues raised by public***

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| 42. | The application was publicised by the posting of 4 site notices and an advert was placed in the local newspaper. A total of 67 owners/occupiers of neighbouring |  |
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properties were directly notified by letter. A further round of publicity was undertaken on 2 February 2024 due to amendments being made to the application form and the application site boundary. Four site notices were posted and all those owner/occupiers of neighbouring properties that were previously notified and all those who had submitted representations on the application were notified by letter and a further advert was placed in the local newspaper.

43. A total of 139 letters of representation and two petitions have been received, all of which object to the application. The first petition contains 400 signatures and the second includes 3 signatures. The representations received include a response from Dorking Business Breakfast Group, which comprises around 30 local businesses, and Circular Dorking. The main reasons given are summarised below.

#### *Location*

- Site location is completely inappropriate and contradicts the Surrey Waste Local Plan (SWLP) including policies 11a, 14 and 15.
- The site is an unauthorised development in the Green Belt and it will not be possible to expand in future.
- The site is not identified for recycling in the SWLP.
- It is absolutely ridiculous to put a recycling site near St Martins School.
- Should consider a location on a main road, out of town and away from residents.
- A building recycling site already exists on Randalls Road, Leatherhead which is nearby and a preferable location.
- Proximity to a residential caravan site and next to a public right of way.

#### *Highways, Traffic and Access*

##### Transport Assessment:

- Transport Assessment is of very poor quality.
- Inadequacy of the Highways Assessment in relation to public safety risk.
- Current access fails the Government's and SCC's own design criteria.

##### Traffic:

- Potential to cause gridlock as roads are already congested in this area.
- Very poor sight lines up and down the access track and at junction with Ranmore Road.
- HGVs need to sweep across the oncoming traffic carriageway when exiting.
- Difficulty for lorries to turn left into Ranmore Road especially when traffic is approaching from the north.
- Vehicles idling and manoeuvring at the entrance to the access track on Ranmore Road.
- HGVs turning and reversing into the station access and access track next to the school bringing Ranmore Road to a standstill.
- Surrounding roads are unsuitable for the proposed number of HGVs.
- Lack of any suitable access to the site from any direction due to existing traffic constraints including narrow spots, blind corners and cyclists.
- Access via Chalk Pit Lane would be unacceptable.
- Significant cumulative impact of traffic and lack of effective signing from public highway.
- Unclear how number of HGV movements will be monitored.

##### Private Access Track:

- Access track is single track with no footway, pathway or passing area.

- Muddy ditch and uneven / slippery grass bank on one side of the access track and high metal fence on the other offer no safety for pedestrians, cyclists, allotment-holders, and dog walkers confronted with an oncoming skip lorry.
- Likely to cause huge problems for anyone accessing the allotment, bike park, riding stables, caravan site and orchard down the single lane track.
- Most of the access track would be unsafe for pedestrians or cyclists travelling to the community orchard, allotments or SHNL as there is no place of refuge.
- Very unsafe to walk a dog, baby in a buggy and a young child to school along the track.
- Public are frightened and being driven away from using the well-used access track to visit local amenities where pedestrians are in fear of oncoming vehicles.
- Access track has become very dangerous as skip lorries and large container wagons reverse along it to gain access to the site.
- HGVs reversing along or across the lane due to a lack of turning space within the yard stopping and blocking everything in its path.
- Pedestrians / cyclists on this narrow lane should not have to negotiate oncoming HGVs.
- Need wellies to walk along the lane all year round.
- Access track looks like it is sinking, is constantly waterlogged and has huge potholes and damaged verges caused by HGVs.
- Access track is constantly being blocked preventing access from emergency services.
- Lack of on-site infrastructure to prevent mud and stone being dragged on to the lane.
- There are no pavements for pedestrians accessing the train station.
- Risk to pedestrians, cyclists, commuters and wheelchair users using the train station.
- Dog leg around LJC Autospares will not be easy for HGVs.
- The application site used to be accessed via the main entrance to the scrap yard before the operator of the application site opened a new access directly into the yard.

#### Traffic Impacts on the School:

- Several recent near misses involving school children and one being hit by a car.
- A child was knocked down outside the school in 2023.
- Safety risk due to 300 children using the start of the access track to get to the school.
- Conflict with school access and will increase congestion due to limited school parking.
- Significant safety risk to children walking, scooting or cycling to school.
- Contrary to school's efforts to improve road safety and encourage access by non-car modes of travel.
- Contradicts Surrey County Council (SCC) commitment to provide pedestrians and cyclists with safe access to local schools.
- Gate to school playing field is 10m from the entrance to LJC Autospares.
- Manned school crossing is obscured by manoeuvring lorries.
- Large vehicles will make the job of the lollipop man more challenging.
- Children behind the lorries cannot be seen safely when lorries roll back slightly whilst carrying out a hill-start on Ranmore Road.
- Lorries turn around right outside the school entrance blocking Ranmore Road.
- Impact of lorry traffic on another school on Ashcombe Road which is the most direct route to the M25 and local A roads.
- Large lorries frequently cause congestion on Ranmore Road by the school.

#### Health and Safety:

- Contravenes public health / safety provision of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- Detrimental impact on mental health.
- Skip lorries kill a disproportionate number of cyclists due to their blind spots.
- Direct threat to young pedestrians not easily visible to drivers due to blind spots.
- Reduced safety on Ashcombe Road / Ranmore Road which are unsuitable for HGVs.
- High risk of serious injury to pedestrians and other road users with a motorcyclist having been felled.
- Request a risk assessment due to the impact of HGVs on highway safety.
- Near misses, huge lorries driving along pavements and mounting the pavement including the pavement opposite whilst reversing and when turning left from Ashcombe Road into Randalls Road.
- Lack of clearance for manoeuvring vehicles.
- Danger to road users and pedestrians due to lack of visibility on road outside school.
- Many lorries run backwards on their hill-starts due to the exit from the access track being uphill.
- Workers do not wear any safety gear or masks and climb the tower of waste with no safety harness.

#### Parking:

- Need for lorries to temporarily park in the local area where there is a lack of space.
- Most local roads have residential parking on both sides.
- Cars are parked on one side of the road which causes visibility issues and congestion.
- Lorries parked up with engines idling while waiting for a time slot to access the site.
- Parking of vehicles related to the business sometimes blocks a right of way.
- Use of residential roads by lorry traffic and skip lorry parking has not been addressed.
- Inconsistent references to on-site parking provision.

#### *Air Quality and Dust*

- Contrary to SWLP policy on air quality.
- Dust Assessment is of poor quality, misleading and does not address the transmission of dust from mud on the lane.
- Local residents have complained about the impact of dust plumes on their properties.
- Incorrect to say there have been no complaints in relation to dust.
- There are no dust control measures on site.
- Green tarpaulin, fence and thin covering of trees do not control dust.
- Applicant cannot rely on trees outside the site boundary to help mitigate dust as the trees are not under the applicant's control.
- High dust levels produced have only been suppressed by recent heavy winter rain fall.
- The equestrian centre car park, school playing fields and access lane have been engulfed with plumes of dust on many occasions.
- Impact of dust clouds on children and prevailing winds will blow dust over the school.
- Dust impact on nearby school, open playground and local area.
- School children may have to spend less time outdoors due to increased pollution.
- Impact of dust from lorries travelling to and from the site.
- Carcinogenic properties of much of the dust created.
- Increase in particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx) and other toxic substances.

- Rise in various types of pollution immediately surrounding the school including exhaust fumes from queueing lorries.
- Young brains are particularly vulnerable to toxins as proven by scientific research.
- Correlation between exposure to vehicle emissions and increased asthma in children.
- Air quality impact on school pupils with asthma and other serious allergies.
- Breathing issues for children and adults at the school.
- Poor air quality on the equestrian centre car park and access lane due to diesel engines and machinery running all day.
- Air quality impact on pedestrians, local residents and allotment users.
- Reduced air quality from HGVs emitting a substantial amount of diesel pollution.
- Materials blowing from uncovered or partly covered vehicles.

#### *Noise*

- Contrary to SWLP Policy 14 in relation to noise.
- Contravenes the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993.
- Noise Assessment is of poor quality, ignores impact on caravans in Conifer Way and fails to address noise from vehicles.
- Noise impact on the school, open playground and local area and vibration from HGVs.
- Detrimental noise impact on school children's learning and staff working conditions.
- Noise level is unacceptably high, invasive, a disturbance and like thunder.
- Noise is audible from my house 0.3 miles away.
- The noise echoes loudly up through the valley impacting the equestrian centre and the houses on the hillside.
- Noise can be heard a long way up onto the National Trust land at the back of the equestrian centre.
- Noise can be heard from the slopes of Ranmore ruining the peace of the area.
- Equestrian centre is greatly impacted from loud engines and machinery running all day.
- Noise of skips being emptied, dragged, stacked and dropped from height is totally unacceptable and has stopped horses being ridden in the indoor riding school.
- Unfair to expect a horse to be ridden and behave in a safe manner with constant noise, loud crashes and bangs from skips, and JCB's dropping and banging rubbish into skips.
- Local pony clubs and horse owners have had to stop coming to use the indoor school.
- A vet commented that riding horses in the indoor school was cruel and a welfare issue.
- The noise is a welfare issue to the horses which can cause severe escape attempts risking a series accident for the horses and their riders/handlers.
- The audible warning sounds of lorries reversing or turning left has not been taken into account.
- Vehicle noise reflected from the acoustic barrier back towards the school has not been considered.
- The noise barrier will be ineffective.

#### *Landscape and Visual Impacts*

- Is taking place on land in the SHNL.
- Completely inappropriate in close proximity to the SHNL.
- Huge very ugly steel structure has been erected in the SHNL and blocks views of Denbies hillside from the top of the lane and Ranmore Common for local residents.
- Site is unsightly and the huge storage barn is not in keeping with the landscape.
- Clouds of dust can be seen from a distance during the drier months.

- Brown appearance of school conifer trees on the roadside may be due to its over-use.
- Adverse impact of noise barrier on the SHNL, AGLV and its setting.
- Query visual impact of acoustic fence and potential to spoil views across the SHNL.

#### *Water Environment*

- Site is causing water pollution for local residents.
- Risk to SES Waters' water supply given proximity of site to drinking water boreholes.
- Damage to the verge from site traffic has blocked the main soakaway/drainage causing the lane to flood.
- Surface water should be dealt with via soakaways or through culverts and contaminated water treated locally.

#### *Odour*

- Smells come from the site.
- Frequent smell of oil around the school due to the prevailing wind direction.

#### *Ecology*

- Contrary to SWLP policy on biodiversity.
- Is no ecological assessment and proposal will directly affect wildlife / precious species.
- Dust, pollutants and noise from the site will have an impact on surrounding wildlife.
- Rare nightingales and surrounding plants will be adversely affected or lost.
- No details of biodiversity net-gain have been provided.

#### *Environment*

- Existing demonstrable harm caused by the waste operation which has damaged the surrounding area.
- Impact on visitors to the Community Orchard where school visits will need to be restricted or curtailed.
- Inappropriate development in a residential area and impact on residential amenity.
- Risk of imported material including dangerous hazardous substances has not been addressed.
- The site is more likely to have a throughput of 75,000 tpa.
- The site is too small to accommodate this proposal.
- Negative environmental impact is directly at odds with the Council's green agenda and community strategies.

#### *Other Matters*

- Potential to depress property values.
- Site would be better used for residential development.
- Question adequacy of on-site storage.

#### *Procedural Matters*

- Applicant has shown total disregard to the law as the use is unlawful.
- EA have licenced the site without any effective consultation.
- Premises extends beyond the boundary shown.
- Red line boundary inadvertently includes the trackway owned by MVDC.
- Relies on access via land owned by Network Rail and MVDC without any agreement.
- Use of Network Rail land to access the site is not referenced as part of the application.
- Planning authorities should confirm the ownership arrangements for the site and adjacent vehicle recycling centre including MVDC's interest in the land.

- Lack of enforcement action by SCC and MVDC which should have already been taken and request that the activity be stopped.
  - Query how many aspects of the proposal are capable of being enforced.
  - The application is not sufficiently coherent to warrant consideration.
  - Would expect company to have received a penalty or fine rather than being allowed to apply for retrospective planning permission.
  - Lack of information and inaccuracies in the application and planning application form.
  - Application is contrary to the covenants which apply to the land.
  - SES Water and the fire service need to be consulted.
  - Application should be submitted in the name of the operator, Surrey Recycling Services and not the vehicle scrap yard company LJC.
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## ***Planning considerations***

### **Introduction**

44. The guidance on the determination of planning applications contained in the Preamble/Agenda front sheet is expressly incorporated into this report and must be read in conjunction with the following paragraphs.
45. In this case the statutory development plan for consideration of the application consists of the Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020 (SWLP), the Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009 (MVCS), the 'saved' policies contained within the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 (MVLDP), and the Dorking Town Area Action Plan 2012 (DTAAP). As only a section of the access track is included within the area covered by the DTAAP, none of the policies contained within the Plan are relevant to the determination of the application.
46. The County Planning Authority (CPA) are in the process of preparing a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) for Surrey which will replace the existing Surrey Minerals Plan 2011 and SWLP 2020. The MWLP remains at an early stage of preparation with the Issues and Options document being published for consultation between 15 November 2021 and 7 March 2022.
47. The District Council are in the process of preparing the MVLP 2020-2037 and published the Proposed Submission Version in 2021 for submission to the Secretary of State for Examination. The Examination process remains ongoing and Main Modifications to the draft MWLP were published for consultation during March and April 2024. As the draft MWLP has reached an advanced stage of preparation, substantial weight can be afforded to those policies contained within it that are not the subject of main modifications given the reasonable expectation that they will not be amended prior to the adoption of the Plan.
48. The CPA has considered the need for the application to be supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The application was found not to fall within the scope of any of the types of development listed in Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2017 (as amended). Neither was it found to involve any changes to any of the types of development listed under Schedule 2 or to be located within or adjacent to any sensitive area listed in Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations. As a consequence, it was concluded that the proposed development did not need to be screened for EIA.

49. In relation to permitting, the Environment Agency (EA) informed the CPA in August 2023 that the site operator currently holds an SR2015 No 4 Environmental Permit. This comprises a 'standard rules' permit which allows the operation of a household, commercial and industrial waste transfer station with a capacity of up to 75,000 tpa. However, this permit does not allow the mechanical treatment of waste. In order to allow the use of the trommel on the site, the EA confirmed that the operator would need to apply for the permit to be varied to SR2015 No 6 which allows waste material to be treated on site.
50. In considering this application, the acceptability of the proposed development will be assessed against relevant development plan policies and material considerations.
51. In assessing the application against development plan policy, it will be necessary to determine whether the proposed measures for mitigating any environmental impact of the development are satisfactory. In this case the main planning considerations are waste management, highways, traffic and access, air quality, noise, landscape and visual impact, ecology and biodiversity, the water environment and Green Belt.

## Waste Management

### ***Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020***

Policy 1: Need for Waste Development

Policy 3: Recycling of Inert Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste

Policy 10: Areas Suitable for Development of Waste Management Facilities

52. Paragraph 1 of the National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) states that positive planning plays a pivotal role in delivering this country's waste ambitions including through delivery of sustainable development and resource efficiency, local employment opportunities and wider climate change benefits, by driving waste management up the waste hierarchy; and, helping to secure waste re-use, recovery or disposal without endangering human health or harming the environment.
53. NPPW paragraph 4 promotes the identification of sites for waste development in local plans which give priority to the re-use of previously developed land. Paragraph 7 states that when determining planning applications, waste planning authorities should, amongst other matters, only expect applicants to demonstrate the quantitative or market need for new or enhanced waste management facilities where proposals are not consistent with an up-to-date Local Plan.
54. The Waste Framework Directive (WFD), as amended, sets out requirements for the collection, transport, recovery and disposal of waste. The WFD includes a requirement to apply the 'waste hierarchy' when planning for waste management. The waste hierarchy is a system of prioritising the different ways in which waste can be managed with the most sustainable method, prevention, at the top of the hierarchy followed by preparing for reuse, recycling, other recovery<sup>1</sup>, with the least sustainable method, disposal, at the bottom.
55. The vision for the SWLP is composed of 5 key elements that reflect national planning policy. These elements include the achievement of net self-sufficiency and sustainable waste management (waste hierarchy). The SWLP Spatial Strategy states that waste

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<sup>1</sup> Processing of wastes into materials to be used as fuels or for backfilling.

management development is prioritised on previously developed land, sites identified for employment uses, and redundant agricultural and forestry buildings and their curtilages and/or land not in the Green Belt. Areas which are likely to offer opportunities for waste development in accordance with this Spatial Strategy include urban areas and towns located close to the boundary with London and large towns, including Guildford, Woking, Reigate/Redhill and Farnham.

56. SWLP Policy 1 states that planning permission will be granted for the development of new waste facilities that contribute to achieving targets for recycling, recovery and the diversion of waste from disposal in a manner that does not prevent management of the waste at the highest point practical in the waste hierarchy. Policy 3 of the SWLP is supportive of applications for C,D&E waste recycling facilities where the site is suitable for such use when assessed against policies in the SWLP and the Spatial Strategy. SWLP Policy 10 states that planning permission will be granted for the development of waste facilities on land identified for employment uses or industrial and storage purposes, land considered to be previously developed and land otherwise suitable for waste development when assessed against other policies in the Plan.
57. The Minerals and Waste Policy Team (M&WPT) recently published a Waste Capacity Needs Assessment (WCNA) to identify the future need for additional waste management capacity in Surrey to 2042. The outcome of this assessment identified a shortfall in management capacity for CD&E waste due to increasing waste arisings, the expiry of existing planning permissions and the consequent closure of temporary waste management facilities.
58. The M&WPT has advised that CD&E recycling covers both the sorting of waste delivered in skips into components for onward recycling and the actual processing of the hard element of this waste stream. In this regard, they point out that Waste Transfer Stations and Materials Recovery Facilities play an important role in the sustainable management of CD&E waste, and that there is therefore a demonstrable need for such facilities.
59. The M&WPT is broadly supportive of the proposal insofar as it would bolster existing recycling capacity in the county, contribute to meeting CD&E waste management requirements, and help drive the management of waste up the Waste Hierarchy. However, the Team highlight the relatively minor waste management capacity that would be provided by the site. As such, while the facility would provide an important role in contributing to the sustainable management of CD&E waste, the Team state that it would not in itself make a significant contribution to meeting the capacity requirements of the county as set out in the WCNA.
60. It is considered that the application would contribute to the delivery of the country's waste ambitions by recovering recyclable C,D&E waste from imported skip waste, segregating the recovered C,D&E waste into different material types, and then storing the material prior to its removal off-site for recycling elsewhere. The waste processing yard is located on previously developed land within the urban area of Dorking. It would support the achievement of net self-sufficiency in the management of Surrey's waste, the sustainable management of waste, promote resource efficiency and provide employment for 9 full-time members of staff. The development would help to drive the management of Surrey's waste up the waste hierarchy, promote the recovery and re-use of waste material and contribute to the identified shortfall in C,D&E waste management capacity in Surrey. In these respects, the proposal would support national waste policy contained in the NPPW, accord with the intentions of the WFD and meet the requirements of SWLP policies 1, 3 and 10.

## Conclusion

61. In view of the above considerations, there is considered to be a demonstrable need for the proposal. The application is considered to be consistent with the principles of positive planning and sustainable waste management and supports the objectives of the waste hierarchy and the achievement of net self-sufficiency in the management of Surrey's waste. In this regard, the application is in accordance with the requirements of the NPPW, WFD and SWLP Policies 1, 3, and 10.

## Highways, Traffic and Access

### ***Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020***

Policy 15: Transport and Connectivity

### ***Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009***

Policy CS18: Transport Options and Accessibility

### ***Mole Valley Local Plan ('saved' policies)***

Policy MOV2: The Movement Implications of Development

### ***Draft Mole Valley Local Plan 2021***

Policy INF1: Transport

62. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 114 seeks to ensure that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users and any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree. Paragraph 115 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
63. SWLP Policy 15 promotes waste development where transport links are adequate to serve the development or can be improved to an appropriate standard. Where the need for road transport has been demonstrated, the policy seeks to ensure that there is safe and adequate means of access, vehicle movements will not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and satisfactory provision is made to allow for safe vehicle turning and parking, manoeuvring and loading.
64. MVCS Policy CS18 states that the availability of travel options and access will be given significant weight in considering development proposals. Transport schemes that lead to improvements in accessibility and give priority to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport will be supported. 'Saved' Policy MOV2 of the MVLP stipulates that development will normally only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it is or can be made compatible with the transport infrastructure and the environmental character in the area, having regard to all forms of traffic generated by that development.
65. Draft MVLP Policy INF1 sets out that development proposals will be assessed for their impact on the highway and public transport network as well as the local environment and should be located so as to minimise any adverse impact on the highway network and maximise the use of sustainable modes of transport. Planning permission will only be granted if any adverse impacts of the development can be overcome by transport improvements considered necessary by the Council.
66. The application site would generate 50 HGV movements per day. This equates to an average of 6.25 HGV movements per hour Monday to Friday. Access and egress would be achieved from Ranmore Road via the southern access track owned by LJC Autospares Ltd, which connects Ranmore Road to the entrance to the ELV facility,

before it merges with the northern access track, and then the northern access track owned by MVDC between the eastern end of the ELV facility and the entrance to the application site. As a consequence, site generated traffic would not use the section of the northern access track between the eastern end of the ELV facility and Ranmore Road which passes the access to the primary school.

67. The northern access track is extremely narrow and is only just wide enough to accommodate one-way HGV movements. Following a site visit, Officers share the concerns raised in letters of objection regarding the inconvenience that would be caused to users of the access track and the risks to the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other users.
68. The applicant acknowledges that there is no scope to offer two-way HGV movements to access the application site from Ranmore Road. Further, they do not consider that the operation of a partial one-way system involving HGVs passing the access to the primary school would be appropriate. The applicant states that given only one HGV would visit the site every hour, traffic flow would be so low that any change to the wider road network would be immaterial. As such, they argue that there should be no requirement to demonstrate that two-way HGV movements can be achieved. They add that pedestrian safety is a priority for the applicant and the operation of the site. In respect of visibility splays, the applicant states that the visibility has been reviewed at the southern access and this complies with the relevant requirements. However, in terms of trip generation, the suggestion that only one HGV would visit the site every hour is not accepted by Officers.
69. The applicant has submitted a Highways Technical Note in support of the application. This seeks to address highway aspects relating to the proposal including the type of vehicles using the site as well as how safe and suitable access can be maintained. This sets out that a 9.6m tipper vehicle can successfully enter the site in forward gear, unload, and execute a 3-point turn to exit the site in forward gear. Similarly, the swept path analysis illustrates that a skip lorry entering the site can pick up skips and exit the site in forward gear.
70. A range of measures are proposed to ensure that the potential impact of the development on local residents and businesses would be minimised. All deliveries would be pre-booked in advance and allocated set arrival times. Suppliers would call the office a minimum of 20 minutes before their vehicle arrives at the site to confirm that the loading area is available. If loading space is unavailable, vehicles would be turned away and given an alternative delivery time.
71. Deliveries to the site would generally take place outside the peak hours on the highway network. Where possible, deliveries would be scheduled to distribute vehicle movements throughout these hours and to avoid more than one vehicle delivering to the site at any one time. All HGV drivers and visitors to the site would be made aware of the access and egress route and of the parking restrictions in the vicinity of the site prior to undertaking their journey. A written briefing and plan for the site would be provided to drivers and visitors.
72. The County Highway Authority (CHA) has assessed the application on highway safety, capacity and policy grounds and recommends that the proposal be refused. Firstly, the CHA state that the applicant has not demonstrated that two-way vehicular movement can be achieved from the proposed intensified access. Without widening the existing access and the private access track, there is a likelihood of vehicles queuing on Ranmore Road whilst waiting for the manoeuvring of HGVs in or out of the site via the narrow private access track. The swept path analysis submitted shows that traffic

waiting on Ranmore Road to allow the left turning of HGVs would obstruct visibility and traffic movements with potential to cause further delays and highway safety issues due to numerous manoeuvres by HGVs at the priority junction. The CHA would not support a development where there is potential for HGVs to reverse on Ranmore Road to manoeuvre in or out of the narrow access.

73. Secondly, the CHA has set out that visibility from the proposed access is compromised particularly for right turning vehicles onto Ranmore Road and left turning vehicles into the private access track. The CHA has noted that vehicles park on the crest of the bridge up to the site access. There are bushes outgrowing onto the pavement thereby reducing pedestrian visibility which is not helped by the lack of a pedestrian footway on the private access track from Ranmore Road.
74. Thirdly, the CHA is concerned about the potential highway impacts of the proposal at the point where the private access track meets the public highway. It has not been demonstrated that pedestrian access and suitable footways have been prioritised in the development of the proposals. This is concerning given the proximity of the proposed access to the primary school as well as pedestrians walking to the station.
75. As a consequence, the proposed intensification of the priority junction off Ranmore Road and the private access track which provides access to Dorking West Station, would involve larger vehicles overrunning kerbs, verges or making a number of manoeuvres on the public highway to access the private access track, leading to highway safety issues. The existing access is too narrow and inadequate to accommodate the anticipated HGV trips as shown on submitted drawings J004523-DD-01 Rev C Site Location Plan dated 19 January 2024 and 2308071-TK07 Swept Path Analysis at Southern Access (9.57m Tipper) dated 25 January 2024.
76. Furthermore, without the scope to modify the existing access and widen the private access track to allow simultaneous vehicle movements, the proposal would cause serious highway safety issues. Whilst submitted drawing 2308071-02 Visibility Splays at Southern Access dated 25 January 2024 demonstrates that adequate visibility splays can be achieved from the school access, it appears that visibility is limited for the right turning vehicles from the proposed access. The situation is compounded by parked vehicles over the bridge and equally so by the proposed two-way vehicular access onto Ranmore Road from the private access track. Ranmore Road is a rural carriageway with a speed limit of 30mph and in accordance with the Manual for Streets, a new access or intensified access should have an 'x' distance of 2.4m x 43m 'y' distance.
77. MVDC has serious concerns over the appropriateness of the access to the site and the district council EHO has advised that the Mole Valley Environmental Health Authority consider that the application is unacceptable. This is on the grounds of highway safety, servicing and pedestrian safety. These sentiments are echoed by a large number of residents who have written in to object to the application. This is primarily due to concerns over the increase in HGV traffic and the implications for the safety of children travelling to school, pedestrians, cyclists and other road users due to the unsuitability of the proposed access arrangements. The CHA's response suggests that they share many of these concerns.

#### Conclusion

78. In view of the highway safety issues that would arise from the intensification of use of the priority junction between the private access track and Ranmore Road, the inadequate nature of the private access track to accommodate HGVs, the inability to

widen the access or the private access track to allow simultaneous vehicle movements and the restricted visibility at the junction between the private access track and Ranmore Road, Officers consider that it has not been demonstrated that there is safe and adequate means of access, that the development can be made compatible with the transport infrastructure and the environmental character in the area and that vehicle movements will have an acceptable impact on highway safety contrary to the requirements of SWLP Policy 15, MVCS Policy CS18, 'saved' MVLP Policy MOV2 and Draft MVLP Policy INF1.

## Environmental Considerations

### ***Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020***

Policy 13: Sustainable Design

Policy 14: Protecting Communities & the Environment

### ***Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009***

Policy CS13: Landscape Character

Policy CS15: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Policy CS20: Flood Risk Management

### ***Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 ('saved' policies)***

Policy ENV4: Landscape Character

Policy ENV14: Enhancement, Management and Creation of Nature Conservation Features

Policy ENV15: Species Protection

Policy ENV67: Groundwater Quality

### ***Draft Mole Valley Local Plan 2021***

Policy EN8: Landscape Character

Policy EN9: Natural Assets

Policy EN12: Pollution Control

Policy INF3: Flood Risk

### *Air Quality*

79. NPPF paragraph 180 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality.
80. Paragraph 0052<sup>2</sup> of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) recognises that air quality is a consideration relevant to the development management process where the development is likely to have an adverse effect on air quality in areas where it is already known to be poor or if the proposed development would be particularly sensitive to poor air quality in its vicinity. Paragraph 006<sup>3</sup> goes on to say that considerations that may be relevant to determining a planning application include whether the development would: lead to changes in vehicle related emissions; involve construction sites that would generate large HGV movements over a period of a year or more, introduce a new point source of air pollution; expose people to harmful concentrations of air pollutants including dust; give rise to potentially unacceptable impacts (such as dust) during construction for nearby sensitive locations; and have a potential adverse effect on biodiversity.

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 32-005-20191101

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 32-006-20191101

81. SWLP Policy 14 supports development where it can be demonstrated that it will not result in unacceptable impacts on communities and the environment in respect of public amenity and safety including impacts caused by dust and fumes and air quality including impacts on identified AQMAs and Clean Air Zones and cumulative impacts. Draft MVLP Policy EN12 states that development should minimise exposure to, and the emission of, pollutants including odour and air pollution, particularly where vulnerable people are located such as health facilities, care homes and schools. Proposals should ensure that they mitigate or avoid any adverse site specific or environmental impact that arises as a consequence of the development.
82. The application site is not located within an identified AQMA or Clean Air Zone. The applicant has submitted a Dust Assessment in support of the application. This seeks to demonstrate the impact of the site on surrounding amenities and provide information on how dust emissions would be managed. The assessment finds that the risk of dust effects from the proposed development for nearby receptors is slight adverse at Receptor 4 (at the corner of the playing fields at St Martin's School) and negligible at all other receptors. The Assessment states that the slight adverse effect would be limited to a very small portion of the school playing field within approximately 5m of receptor 4 and that the impact on the remainder of the playing field would be negligible. This is based on a worst-case assumption that the fugitive dust potential from the site would be 'medium' although for the majority of the time, the dust potential would be likely to be 'small' resulting in a negligible dust effect at all receptors.
83. The Dust Assessment therefore concludes that the overall significance of dust effects would not be significant. This takes account of designed-in mitigation measures, good management techniques and adopted best practice procedures to minimise dust emissions. These include covering the waste unloading area with a canopy and the minimisation of drop heights from loading or waste handling equipment.
84. The applicant has subsequently provided details of a sprinkler system which has been installed on the application site. This extends around the yard and sits at approximately 3m in height. There are two taps for controlling the sprinkler system where mist can be sprayed as necessary to control any dust.
85. The County Air Quality Consultant (CAQC) believes that the key potential air quality impacts would arise during the operational phase and comprise deposited dust and suspended particulate matter on the local area. They consider that the Dust Assessment provides sufficient information for SCC to establish that this is an appropriate use of the land in the context of air quality and that the impacts on the surrounding area would not be significant.
86. While the impacts of vehicle movements are likely to be small, the CAQC advises that it would be prudent to clarify if vehicle movements have been considered. In relation to mitigation measures, the CAQC has advised that whilst the sprinkler system comprises one form of dust mitigation, the applicant should be requested to submit a formal Dust Management Plan (DMP). This is partly because it remains unclear whether the six skips to be stored within the yard would be open or covered, what prevents wind whipping of the materials stored inside them and what mitigation measures are in place to minimise dust emissions outside of operational hours. The CAQA assumes that the sprinkler system would not operate 24 hours a day. The CAQA therefore recommends that further information is provided before the application is determined.
87. A number of representations have been received objecting to the proposal due the adverse impact of dust with references being made to the inadequacy of the green tarpaulin fence to control dust and plumes of dust emanating from the site. These

claims are supported by evidence obtained by Officers. During the site visit, it was evident that the green tarpaulin fence was being poorly maintained by the operator as it was torn in some areas, contained a number of holes and was partly collapsed in places around the site boundary. This reduces the scope to prevent dust escaping from the site. Further the district council EHO has provided photographic evidence of dust plumes rising from the site. This seems to indicate that existing mitigation measures are insufficient to mitigate the impact of dust. Whilst further information has been requested from the applicant to address the existing concerns, no further information has been submitted.

#### Conclusion

88. The CAQC has advised that the air quality impact of the development on the surrounding area would not be significant. However as the applicant has not submitted the further information on air quality recommended by the CAQC prior to the determination of the application, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on communities and the environment in respect of public amenity and safety including impacts caused by dust or that exposure to air pollution would be minimised, contrary to the requirements of SWLP Policy 14 and Draft MVLP Policy EN12.

#### Noise

89. NPPF paragraph 180 states that planning decisions should prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of noise pollution. Paragraph 191 adds that planning decisions should ensure new development is appropriate for its location, mitigate, and reduce to a minimum, potential adverse noise impacts resulting from new development, and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.
90. NPPF paragraph 193 sets out that planning decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities. Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.
91. SWLP Policy 14 requires that waste development does not result in unacceptable impacts on communities and the environment including in relation to public amenity and safety in respect of impacts caused by noise. Draft MVLP Policy EN12 states that development should minimise exposure to, and the emission of, pollutants including noise and that proposals should ensure that they mitigate or avoid any adverse site specific or environmental impact that arises as a consequence of the development. In particular, the location of noise generating uses close to existing noise-sensitive uses should be avoided, unless the impact can be acceptably mitigated.
92. The Surrey County Council Guidelines for Noise and Vibration Assessment and Control (January 2020) has been produced to assist in the assessment of noise impacts from development proposals. Paragraph 4.9 states that where an adverse impact or significant adverse impact is identified following BS 4142:2014 ("*Method for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound*"), the applicant must demonstrate that the noise has been mitigated as far as is reasonably practicable in

accordance with the Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE) and NPPG. Where a significant adverse impact is still expected to occur following mitigation, then the application should normally be refused.

93. The applicant has submitted a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) in support of the application which has been undertaken in accordance with BS 4142: 2014. An ambient noise survey was undertaken between Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July and Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023 in order to establish the environmental noise climate. The survey consisted of one long-term monitoring position, located on the staircase at the site offices which overlooks the main processing area (Position 1), and two attended spot measurements located to the north of the yard on the opposite side of the private access track by the entrance to the equestrian centre (Position 2).
94. At Position 1, the measurement results on a weekday (0800-1700 hours) found that the ambient noise level was 76  $L_{Aeq,T}$ , dB and the typical background noise level was 47  $L_{A90, 15min}$ , dB. On Saturday (0800-1700 hours) the ambient noise level was found to be 55  $L_{Aeq,T}$ , dB and the typical background noise level was 42  $L_{A90, 15min}$ , dB.
95. This NIA identifies seven specific noise sources arising from the proposed development as follows: S1 Trommel; S2 Skips Unstacking; S3 Skips Tipping; S4 Excavator Drops; S5 Excavator Idling; S6 Pressure Washer; and S7 Moving Large Skip. The noise sensitive receptors identified in the NIA comprise: the horse stables/riding school; caravan park (Gypsy and Travellers site); residential dwelling (150m to the north of the site); and the primary school.
96. The results indicate that a 'significant adverse impact' (+10dB above the background noise level) is predicted at the stables/riding school from sources S1-S4 on both weekdays and Saturdays and at the caravan park on Saturdays. In terms of the potential for mitigation, as the site is limited in size the NIA finds that moving the sound sources is expected to have a limited impact. The ability to reduce the sound levels at source is also limited due to the nature of the sound sources which include significant amounts of impact noise.
97. The NIA states that the remaining practical solution is to install a 3m high solid fence along the northern boundary of the site and an additional 2m high fence (overall height 4m) on top of the existing buildings to the west boundary of the site to infill the gap on this side. The assessment advises that the fence should have a minimum mass of 10kg/m<sup>2</sup>, be close boarded without gaps and be certified to retain the weight and therefore the acoustic performance throughout the lifetime of the fence.
98. With the acoustic fence in place, the NIA finds that the impact is predicted to be an 'adverse impact' at the stables (between 5dB and 10dB above background) during the weekday which is a reduction from the previous 'significant adverse impact' and therefore complies with SCC's Noise Guidelines. As most of the activities at the stables are likely to take place inside the stable building, the NIA finds that the practicable impact is likely to be lower than the assessment suggests. The impact at the caravan park is predicted to reduce to between a 'low impact' and an 'adverse impact' with the mitigation in place.
99. As the background noise level is lower on a Saturday, the assessment including the mitigation still predicts a 'significant adverse impact' from sources S1 to S4 for both the stables and the caravan park. Given the limitations of the additional mitigation measures, the NIA recommends that no noise operations should take place on a Saturday.

100. The district council EHO considers the application to be unacceptable on noise grounds. Having visited the application site, the district council EHO has witnessed highly intrusive impulsive noise levels in the vicinity of the sand school caused by the movement of skips. The district council EHO's investigations show that these activities are generating impulsive noise events in excess of 55-60 dBA Lamax fast at the sand school. These impulsive noise events are typically 20 dBA above background noise levels and are highly intrusive.
101. Although time corrections have been added to calculate the BS:4142 noise rating due to the short duration of these impulsive noise events, the district council EHO considers that in the case of the sensitive receptor, this reduces the impact of noise as it is a mechanism to average the noise over the assessment period. The district council EHO explains that this is not how noise is experienced by the receiver, and especially when it is a horse which cannot rationalise the noise and the noisiest impulsive event takes place at different times randomly through the day.
102. The district council EHO is concerned that these impulsive noise events together with the use of the neighbouring sand school have not been fully considered in the NIA. The district council EHO states that UK policy requires an assessment of intrusive noise, not an assessment in accordance with BS:4142. As a consequence, there are corrections that are made for impulsivity and tonality but when the noise is as impulsive and tonal as this, the district council EHO considers that it is almost impossible for the assessor to make independent judgements.
103. The district council EHO's main contention is that given the complexity of the noise climate at the application site, policy requires an assessment of noise impacts as they effect the sensitive receptors and are perceived by the receiver rather than averaged noise levels assessed over an hour. Normally there is little difference. However, the receiver in this case is a sand school which are usually used as a safe environment to train both riders and horses free of environmental distractions. The district council EHO therefore considers that the proposed MRF would evidently prejudice the use of the sand school given the intensity and magnitude of noise resulting from the dropping and banging of skips.
104. As a consequence, the district council EHO considers that the NIA is not sufficient in the context of the application site. This is because in order to understand the impact on the receiving sand school, both the magnitude and frequency of intrusive noise events with and without the waste site operating need to be considered as well as the BS:4142 assessment. Further, the district council EHO does not consider that the height of the proposed noise barrier is sufficient.
105. The County Noise Consultant (CNC) has advised that they have a number of concerns relating to the assessment of noise from the proposed development at noise sensitive receptors. These comprise the omission of any specific details of the noise source data and topography that has been used to prepare the noise model, the omission of the noise contour plots from the computer noise model for each activity which are needed in order to gain a greater understanding of the sound propagation, the lack of a reasonable cumulative assessment, the need to increase the minimum mass of the proposed noise barrier from 10kg/m<sup>2</sup> to 15kg/m<sup>2</sup> and for it to be maintained throughout its lifetime, and the omission of a BS:4142 context assessment which is a necessary part of the assessment. As a consequence, the CNC has advised that further clarification is required. The CNC's concerns have been shared with the district council EHO. The district council EHO is satisfied that the CNC's advice amplifies their own comments and is similar and supportive of their position.

106. A large number of representations have been received objecting to the application on noise grounds. The concerns raised by the district council EHO and the CNC have been shared with the applicant who has not addressed the issues raised by the district council EHO or responded to the concerns raised by the CNC.

#### Conclusion

107. In view of the concerns raised in relation to the lack of information provided in the NIA submitted by the applicant and that the proposals do not suitably mitigate adverse impacts from intrusive noise on the adjoining sand school and stable premises, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on communities and the environment in relation to public amenity and safety in respect of impacts caused by noise or that the impact on existing noise-sensitive uses can be acceptably mitigated, contrary to the requirements of SWLP Policy 14 and Draft MVLP Policy EN12.

#### *Landscape and Visual Impact*

#### Policy and Guidance

108. NPPF paragraph 182 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now known as National Landscapes) which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
109. Paragraph 039<sup>4</sup> of the NPPG refers to the legislative requirement for relevant authorities, which includes planning authorities, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in National Landscapes, to have regard to the purpose for which these areas are designated. This duty is particularly important to the delivery of the statutory purposes of protected areas and is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Landscape boundaries, but which might have an impact on their setting or protection.
110. NPPG paragraph 042<sup>5</sup> sets out that land within the setting of National Landscapes often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the setting of National Landscapes will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.
111. Policy 14 of the SWLP requires waste development to be consistent with national planning policy with respect to protected landscapes, including the SHNL, and not to result in unacceptable impacts on communities and the environment in respect of the landscape (including impacts on the appearance, quality and character of the landscape and any features that contribute to its distinctiveness, including character areas defined at the national and local levels).

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 8-039-20190721

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-042-20190721

112. MVCS Policy CS13 requires all new development to respect and, where appropriate, enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape character area in which it is proposed. 'Saved' Policy ENV4 of the MVLP aims to take account of the visual impact of the proposed development on the landscape, the extent to which the impact of new buildings has been softened and integrated into the landscape by careful consideration of siting, design, colour and associated planting and whether any existing landscape features such as trees and hedgerows should be retained. Draft MVLP Policy EN8 requires new development to reinforce the scenic quality and distinctiveness of the landscape in which it is located and to be influenced by the local landscape context. Development proposals lying outside the SHNL but which would spoil its setting by harming public views into or from the SHNL, will be refused.
113. Whilst not forming part of the statutory development plan, The Surrey Hills Management Plan helps to set out the strategic context for development and provides evidence of the value and special qualities of the Surrey Hills National Landscape (SHNL). Planning Management Policy P1 states that in balancing different considerations associated with determining planning applications and development plan land allocations, great weight will be attached to any adverse impact that a development proposal would have on the amenity, landscape and scenic beauty of the SHNL and the need for its enhancement. Policy P2 says that development will respect the special landscape character of the locality, giving particular attention to potential impacts on ridgelines, public views and tranquillity. The proposed use and colour of external building materials will be strictly controlled to harmonize within their related landscape and particularly to avoid buildings being incongruous.

#### Landscape Assessment

114. The application site is located within the setting of the SHNL. However, the application site does not fall within a local landscape character areas (LCA) due to its location on the edge of the built-up area in north-west Dorking. It is sandwiched between existing industrial uses in the form of an ELV facility immediately to the east and a car body repair shop immediately to the west. Whilst both the SHNL and AGLV are located immediately to the west of the application site, this boundary does not mark the beginning of open and unspoilt countryside. The car body repair shop, car parking area, Conifer Park Gypsy and Traveller site, Ranmore Road Allotments and Ranmore BMX and Mountain Bike Park are all located to the west of the application site and are located within the SHNL. Further, a large industrial estate is located to the south of the application site immediately beyond the railway line.
115. The SHNL Planning Adviser has commented that as the application site adjoins the SHNL, the issue is whether the setting of the SHNL is spoilt by harming public views into or from the SHNL. In this regard, the SHNL Planning Adviser considers that as the application site is unsightly and publicly prominent being located adjacent to Dorking West Station, it does not meet national policy contained in paragraph 182 of the NPPF and is contrary to Surrey Hills Management Plan Policy P1.
116. The County Landscape Officer (CLO) has advised that although the site is not located within a defined LCA of the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015, the Albury to Ranmore Chalk Ridge LCA lies in close proximity to the north and west of the site. Having reviewed historical mapping, the CLO points out that it is evident that some form of development (most likely commercial/industrial uses) has been present along the northern side of the railway for a considerable time and since at least the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.

117. Whilst the application site adjoins the boundary of the SHNL, the CLO advises that this area, which includes another industrial use, a traveller site, a riding school and allotments, represents a transition between the edge of the built-up area of Dorking and the undeveloped countryside beyond. Whilst clearly having local value in terms of the allotment facility and community orchard etc, it does not have the high scenic quality more typical of the National Landscape further away from the edge of settlement.
118. The CLO notes that the proposal seeks to regularise the use of the site as a MRF, with associated built development including a two-storey portacabin and a waste processing structure with a sloping roof of 6.3 - 7.8m in height and a footprint of approximately 100 square metres. With this in mind, the CLO notes that the site benefits from some established trees (probably self-sown sycamores) along its northern and southern boundaries, which would be retained and provide a degree of screening of the site from surrounding views.
119. The CLO considers that, due to its limited scale, the aforementioned transitional character of this area and the absence of prominent public views of the site (particularly from within the National Landscape due to screening from topography and vegetation), the proposed development would not result in an unacceptable level of harm to the visual setting of the SHNL or the local AGLV designation.
120. Despite this, the CLO does have some concerns about the quality and appearance of the structures which have been erected on the site, of which the waste processing building is the largest and most prominent. The CLO advises that the main views of the site would be from people using the private access track owned by MVDC to access the allotments, community orchard and Ranmore BMX and Mountain Bike Park to the west; and from passengers on trains passing along the adjacent railway. Oblique views of the site are possible from the westbound platform at Dorking West Station and the Ranmore Road bridge over the railway line, but when trees are in leaf such views are largely screened.
121. The CLO considers that at present, the site boundaries appear unsightly due to the presence of high-level plastic sheeting (presumably for health & safety reasons). Should this application be approved, the CLO considers that an alternative solution should be sought for this sheeting and queries whether the solid acoustic fencing proposed would negate the need for the sheeting.
122. Further, the CLO has commented that although the relatively large waste processing structure is of a somewhat poor quality appearance, they accept that there is a tension between the type of construction for these sorts of utilitarian structures and the general planning policy requirement for high quality design. The CLO considers that provided the existing site boundary trees are retained and protected, its overall appearance could be improved by painting the building fully in a relatively dark green colour, below roof level, and trimming off the excess widths of steel roof support beams.
123. With regard to noise impact from the operation of the proposed use, there is a general requirement that development should respect the special landscape character of the National Landscape, including in relation to relative tranquillity. This is reflected by Policy P2 of the Surrey Hills Management Plan. The CLO explains that the private access track which passes the site is not a Public Right of Way. The CLO notes that the Ranmore Road Allotments are located in close proximity to the west, which are likely to have a concentration of people at busy times, with an expectation of a certain degree of tranquillity. There is also the Dorking Community Orchard and Ranmore BMX and Mountain Bike Park next to the allotments.

124. The proposed use would operate between 0900-1700 Monday to Friday and 0900-1600 on Saturday. Background noise levels would be influenced by other existing uses such as the railway and neighbouring commercial/industrial uses, including those on either side of the railway. The CLO considers that it is likely that noise from the proposed development would dissipate further away from the site boundaries. Whilst a noise assessment has been undertaken, the CLO points out that this focusses on specific sensitive receptors rather than overall amenity within outdoor locations of the SHNL. The CLO notes that the acoustic fencing proposed is predicted to provide some degree of noise mitigation.
125. Overall, the CLO is inclined to think that at certain times there would be some localised adverse impact on the relative tranquillity of the SHNL in close proximity to the application site, but it should be acknowledged that this is a transitional location between the edge of Dorking and the countryside beyond, and so expectations of relative tranquillity would be lower than for more 'remote' locations deeper within the undeveloped countryside.
126. In the event that planning permission is granted, the CLO would recommend the imposition of planning conditions to safeguard existing trees on the site and would support controls over the hours and days of operation of the development, in order to minimise the impact of noise on the amenities of local receptors and the relative tranquillity of the National Landscape.
127. Representations have been received describing the waste processing building as a very ugly huge steel structure in the SHNL which blocks views of Ranmore Common for local residents and querying the visual impact of the acoustic fence and its potential to spoil views across the SHNL. The measures suggested by the CLO to improve the appearance of the waste processing building could be secured by condition. The acoustic fence would not be significantly greater in height than the existing fence which encloses the northern boundary of the ELV facility. The visual impact would also be reduced by the retention of existing vegetation screening and the context of the site in relation to the nature of surrounding land uses. Further, Officers consider that the focus of the assessment should be on the visual impact from public viewpoints.
128. Officers accept that the unsightly nature of the site's appearance is partly due its industrial nature and its use as a MRF for the recovery and sorting of imported waste material. Whilst the cluttered nature of the site does not help to enhance its appearance, it is acknowledged that a lot of the miscellaneous equipment stored on site would be removed if planning permission was granted as this equipment is not shown on the submitted drawings. Hence, it is likely that the site would appear a lot tidier than it is today in the event that planning permission is granted.
129. Officers acknowledge that the visual appearance of the green tarpaulin is not enhanced by its poorly maintained state being torn and partly collapsed in places. Officers consider it likely that this would need to be retained to mitigate the impact of dust and that the proposed acoustic fence would not replicate the effectiveness of the tarpaulin in controlling dust emissions. However, this would need to be confirmed as part of the assessment of a Dust Management Plan (DMP). Further, the acoustic fence would help to screen a significant proportion of the tarpaulin and its appearance could be improved by better maintenance which could be included as requirement of the DMP.
130. In relation to the main views of the site, Officers concur with the CLO's findings. During the site visit, Officers observed that views from the private access track and the

Ranmore Road bridge crossing over the railway bridge are tempered by the appearance of the ELV facility in the foreground and the JCB excavator sited within the ELV facility. Lorries parked on the side of the southern access track also detract from views from the private access track. The view from passengers on passing trains would be seen in the context of neighbouring industrial and commercial uses located either side of the application site. Further, Officers observed that views from the platform on the south side of Dorking Station are seen in the context of views in the foreground of grey coloured industrial style fencing along the southern boundary of the ELV facility, a number of scrap vehicles visible above the fence and a large unsightly industrial building situated towards the western end of the ELV facility.

131. Officers also noted that the JCB excavator would be visible from some locations, especially on those occasions when its arm is extended more vertically. However, such occasions would be more limited, for a temporary duration with the impact reduced by the backdrop of the proposed waste processing building behind. Further, this would be seen in the context of the JCB excavator located with the neighbouring ELV facility which is more prominent from the platform at Dorking West Station and the bridge on Ranmore Road.
132. It is acknowledged that the Ranmore Road Allotments, the Dorking Community Orchard and the Ranmore BMX and Mountain Bike Park may have a concentration of people at busy times. However, it is considered that their sensitivity to noise disturbance is likely to be reduced as they would not be enjoying the special qualities of the SHNL in the typical sense.
133. The views of the SHNL Planning Adviser are therefore shared in so far as the proposal would have some localised adverse impacts on landscape quality and the relative tranquillity of the SHNL and its setting. However, these impacts are not considered significant as the landscape character of the land adjoining the SHNL and within its setting is not considered to be complementary in this case. Further, the presence of other commercial and industrial style buildings and uses detract from existing views to and from the SHNL and adds to the level of background noise in the surrounding area.

#### Conclusion

134. Officers acknowledge that some localised landscape impacts would result from the proposal, including in relation to the landscape quality and tranquillity of the SHNL and its setting. However, given the context of the application site and with the imposition of planning conditions to safeguard existing trees, improve the appearance of the waste processing building, ensure that the tarpaulin is properly maintained, should its retention be deemed necessary, and control the hours and days of the operation, the harm is considered capable of being sufficiently reduced so that the landscape impact is acceptable and the SHNL and its setting are protected. For these reasons, Officers are satisfied that the proposal is consistent with national policy with respect to protected landscapes and would not result in unacceptable impacts on the appearance, quality and character of the landscape in accordance with the relevant development plan policies.

#### *Ecology and Biodiversity*

135. NPPF paragraph 180 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value and soils; recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services including trees and woodland; and minimising impacts on and providing net-gains for biodiversity.

136. Paragraph 186 states that planning permission should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for; be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and, be supported for development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity whilst opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net-gains for biodiversity.
137. Policy 13 of the SWLP requires all proposals for waste development to demonstrate that measures are included to maximise biodiversity gains during its construction and operation. SWLP Policy 14 requires that waste development does not result in unacceptable impacts on communities and the environment including in relation to the natural environment including biodiversity, sites of local importance for biodiversity such as SNCIs, irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and protected species.
138. MVCS Policy CS15 seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and areas of geological importance and retain all mature hedges and trees within developed sites. Policy ENV14 of the MVLP promotes measures to protect or enhance existing nature conservation features. MVLP Policy ENV15 states that development that would materially harm a protected species or its habitat will not be permitted. Policy EN9 of the Draft MVLP supports development proposals that include measures to conserve and enhance native habitats, include species as an integral part of the proposed development, integrate wildlife habitats into built structures and their curtilages, and seek to minimise light disturbance.
139. The legal requirements brought in through the Environment Act 2021 for major planning applications to provide a minimum biodiversity net-gain (BNG) of 10% compared to the pre-development baseline came into force on 12 February 2024. As the application was submitted in June 2023, the new legal requirements do not apply to this proposal.
140. The submitted Planning Statement sets out that the proposal would not give rise to any environmental impact or have an adverse impact on trees along the site boundary. The application has also confirmed that no external lighting is proposed as part of the application meaning that waste recycling operations would finish earlier during the winter months.
141. The applicant has submitted an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), a Tree Protection Plan and an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) in support of the application. The AMS confirms that the applicant does not intend to remove any trees from the site and includes measures to ensure the root protection areas around existing trees are protected. The EEP proposes the installation of two 32 millimetre bird boxes (Schwegler Nest Box 1B or Schwegler Nest Box 2M) on the edge of the upper floor of the proposed two storey portacabin just below roof level. These are shown facing north and east respectively to avoid direct sunlight and wettest winds. The EEP sets out that these bird boxes work for tits and are also suitable for larger birds such as redstart, nuthatch, sparrows and flycatchers.
142. A letter of objection has been received querying the impact of the proposal on wildlife and protected species. The County Ecological Officer has advised that as the scale and nature of the proposal is small, a full ecological appraisal is not required. However, potential impacts upon bats and breeding birds need to be considered in line with

legislative and planning policy requirements. In this case, as no trees are proposed to be removed from the application site, the County Ecological Officer has confirmed that they have no concerns regarding nesting birds and roosting bats. The County Ecological Officer has also stated that they are happy with the submitted EEP and have no concerns in relation to the provision of ecological enhancements.

143. The County Arboriculturist Officer (CAO) has advised that the full extent of the site has historically been subject to long-term work activity and impacts, and consequently considers the arboricultural impact to be low. The CAO therefore has no objection to the application and supports the approach including the tree protection measures proposed.

#### *Conclusion*

144. Given that no trees are to be removed, the avoidance of any impacts on nesting birds and roosting bats and the ecological enhancements and tree protection measures being proposed by the applicant, Officers are satisfied that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on ecological and biodiversity interests and would incorporate an element of biodiversity net-gain in accordance with the relevant local development plan policies.

#### *Water Environment*

145. Paragraph 165 of the NPPF requires that inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. NPPF paragraph 180 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to unacceptable levels of water pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as water quality.
146. SWLP Policy 14 requires that waste development does not result in unacceptable impacts on communities and the environment including in relation to the water environment with respect to: (a) flood risk (arising from all sources), including impacts on, and opportunities to provide and enhance, flood storage and surface water drainage capacity; and (b) water resources, including impacts on the quantity and quality of surface water and ground water resources, taking account of Source Protection Zones, the status of surface watercourses and waterbodies and ground water bodies.
147. MVCS Policy CS20 states that the Council will expect to see the use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) as part of any development proposals. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required for sites within or adjacent to areas at risk of surface water flooding as identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. 'Saved' Policy ENV67 of the MVLP sets out that development will not be permitted which may have an adverse impact on the quality of ground water.
148. Draft MVLP Policy EN12 requires development proposals to maintain or improve the environmental quality of ground water and drinking water supplies and prevent contaminated run-off. Where impacts of a development on water quality are likely, applications should be supported by an assessment of the likely impacts and appropriate mitigation strategies. Policy INF3 of the draft MVLP aims to prevent the pollution of ground and surface water and ensure that all development will seek to avoid, reduce or mitigate flood risk.

149. The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 and has a low probability of river and sea flooding. In terms of surface water flood risk and drainage, the proposed unloading area for waste processing would be located directly in front of the waste processing building. During periods of rainfall, any surface water run-off from the concrete slab would be captured by an Aco drain containing three different chambers. The first chamber receives the silt and any oil, the second chamber cleans the water and the third chamber would store the clean water.
150. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has reviewed the surface water drainage strategy for the proposed development and assessed it against national planning policy, national planning guidance and technical standards for sustainable drainage systems. As there would be no change to the impermeable area or existing surface water drainage system, the LLFA have advised that they have no comments to make on the proposal.
151. SES Water has advised that the application site is in close proximity to a number of their Dorking boreholes, less than 500m at the closest point, and falls within Source Protection Zone (SPZ) 2, suggesting that site activities have the potential to impact on the water abstracted from nearby boreholes. As water abstracted from these boreholes is used for drinking water purposes, SES Water have stated that safeguarding ground water quality in the area is a key priority. SES Water have therefore requested reassurance that the site would not negatively impact on surrounding ground water quality and would like to understand what measures are in place or would be introduced to ensure ground water quality will be safeguarded.
152. The EA has confirmed that the application site lies within a principal aquifer and SPZ 2 associated with the Dorking pumping station to the south. The EA has objected to the proposal and recommends that planning permission be refused as the planning application does not demonstrate that the risks of pollution to controlled waters are acceptable or can be appropriately managed. This is because minimal drainage information has been submitted as part of the application, the applicant has not demonstrated how the proposed drainage of surface water and foul water will protect ground water and no contamination assessment has been provided.
153. The EA advise that the storage, treatment and processing of potentially polluting waste materials can present risks to ground water. Leachate or other polluting substances may leak from storage and processing areas. Materials or waste may be hazardous or contain hazardous substances (for example, oils in cars and machinery, and chemical waste stored in drums).
154. Officers note that the 'standard rules' environmental permit held by the operator does not allow any point source emission into surface waters or groundwater. Further the permit requires records of matters which affect the condition of land and ground water to be retained by the operator until the surrender of the permit.

#### Conclusion

155. In view of the lack of drainage information provided by the applicant and the absence of a contamination assessment, and given the location of the site within a principal aquifer and SPZ 2, Officers consider that the applicant has not demonstrated that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the quality of ground water resources by preventing the release of contaminated run-off from the site, contrary to the requirements of SWLP Policy 14, MVLP 'saved' Policy ENV67 and draft MVLP Policy EN12.

## Green Belt

### **Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020**

Policy 9: Green Belt

### **Draft Mole Valley Local Plan 2021**

Policy EN1: The Green Belt

156. NPPF paragraph 142 states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, the fundamental aim of which is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; with the essential characteristics of Green Belts being their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 143 sets out that Green Belts serve 5 purposes: a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. NPPF paragraph 150 explains that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity.
157. Paragraph 152 of the NPPF explains that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
158. NPPF Paragraph 154 sets out that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless they fall into one of seven categories listed. Paragraph 155 of the NPPF refers to 6 categories of development that are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
159. Policy 9 of the SWLP states that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate waste management development in the Green Belt unless it is shown that very special circumstances exist. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm caused to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposal is clearly outweighed by other considerations associated with the proposal, either on their own or in combination.
160. Draft MVLP Policy EN1 states that designated Green Belt land will be protected against inappropriate development, as defined by national policy. Inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances are demonstrated which are concluded to outweigh the potential harm, including harm to the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it.

#### Inappropriate Development

161. Part of the application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt where there is a general policy presumption against inappropriate development. This relates to a 133m section of the northern access track. This section is located between the entrance to the proposed MRF and the eastern end of the neighbouring ELV facility and would be used to access and egress the proposed MRF by all site derived traffic.

The operational yard, proposed buildings and the southern access track are situated inside the Dorking Town Centre boundary and outside of the Green Belt.

162. Officers consider that the need for waste lorries to traverse Green Belt land in order to travel between the yard and the public highway would not conflict with any of the five purposes of Green Belt land. However, the proposed development is for waste management use and does not fall within any of the 7 categories of development listed in paragraph 154 of the NPPF where the construction of new buildings may be considered appropriate. Neither does it fall within either of the 6 categories of development listed in paragraph 155 of the NPPF which are not inappropriate provided they preserve Green Belt openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
163. As a consequence, the application is not regarded as an exception to Green Belt policy in the context of paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF. The proposed development therefore comprises inappropriate development within the Green Belt where the movement of HGVs would impact on openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

#### Harm

164. The remainder of the construction phase would result in temporary harm to the Green Belt due to the generation of HGV and other traffic movements from the construction of the acoustic fence and the transport of miscellaneous equipment off-site that does not form part of the submitted proposals. Other harm resulting from the remaining construction activities would arise from the movement of HGVs and other traffic. This would include noise, air quality, landscape and visual impacts, inconvenience to users of the private access track and the risks to the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other users due to the limited width of the access track.
165. Once operational, the proposed development would cause greater harm to the openness of the Green Belt in relation to the generation of traffic including HGVs. Other harm would also result from the movement of site derived traffic in respect of noise, localised landscape and visual impacts, including in relation to the landscape quality and tranquillity of the SHNL and its setting, air quality, the existing access track being too narrow and inadequate to accommodate the anticipated number of HGV movements, inconvenience to users of the private access track and the risks to the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other users. The harm caused due the access being inadequate and too narrow is not capable of being mitigated.
166. Each of the identified impacts are considered to constitute other harm which are afforded substantial weight. It is therefore for Officers to consider whether such harm to the openness of the Green Belt, and other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

#### Very Special Circumstances

167. The applicant acknowledges that the private access road is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt. However, they consider that the proposal would not impact on the openness of the Green Belt as there is no built development being proposed on Green

Belt land. As a consequence, the applicant has not provided any 'very special circumstances' in order to demonstrate the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

168. SWLP paragraph 5.3.1.5 considers it unlikely that the anticipated waste management needs of the county will be met without developing waste management facilities on Green Belt land. It goes on to say that the overarching need for waste management in Surrey, combined with a lack of suitable alternative sites outside the Green Belt and the need to locate facilities close to sources of waste are among the reasons why it is considered that very special circumstances may exist for allowing development within the Green Belt. Further reasons are the wider social and environmental benefits associated with sustainable waste management, including the need for a range of sites.
169. The application site is not allocated in a development plan for waste management use. Whilst the lack of suitable non-Green Belt sites in Surrey is acknowledged, there is likely to be a greater opportunity of finding an alternative suitable site for the development proposed in a location that is well related to the source of waste arisings given the small nature of the application site. The Minerals and Waste Policy Team has advised that there is a demonstrable need for MRFs in Surrey and are broadly supportive of the proposal. For that reason, they also highlight the relatively minor waste management capacity that would be provided by the site which would not in itself make a significant contribution to meeting the capacity requirements of the county. Further, although sustainable waste management gives rise to wider social, environmental and economic benefits, the proposed development is not considered to be sustainable given that it has been assessed as being contrary to development plan policies in relation to transport, air quality, noise and the water environment.

#### Conclusion

170. The proposed development constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt, which should only be approved in 'very special circumstances'. The applicant has not advanced any 'very special circumstances' as they do not consider that the application would impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Having identified the harm that the development would cause to the openness of the Green Belt together with any other harm, Officers do not consider that there are sufficient very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm. For these reasons, the application is contrary to NPPF paragraphs 152 and 153, SWLP Policy 9 and Draft MVLP Policy EN1.

### ***Human Rights Implications***

171. The Human Rights Act Guidance for Interpretation, contained in the Preamble to the Agenda is expressly incorporated into this report and must be read in conjunction with the following paragraph.
172. In this case, it is the Officer's view that the applicant has not demonstrated that there is safe and adequate means of access to the highway network or that vehicle movements associated with the development would have an acceptable impact on highway safety, and that the proposal would have acceptable impacts with regards to air quality, noise, and ground water quality. It is considered likely that the impacts in terms of air quality and ground water quality would be capable of being mitigated. The

transport impacts would not be capable of being mitigated and it remains uncertain whether the noise impacts can be mitigated. Whilst the impacts are acknowledged, they are not considered to be of a sufficient scale to engage Article 8 and Article 1 of the Protocol.

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## **Conclusion**

173. The part retrospective application is seeking to retain a MRF on land at Dorking West Station Yard that has been operating since April 2022 without the benefit of planning permission. The proposal includes a building for the bulking up and processing of mixed skip waste, a two-storey office/welfare facility, storage units, skip storage, entrance gates and the installation of an acoustic fence. The application is part retrospective as the existing layout differs from that shown on the submitted drawings and the acoustic fence has yet to be installed.
174. The application would contribute to the need for C,D&E waste recycling capacity in Surrey albeit the contribution would be relatively minor when compared to the identified need. Despite this, it would help to drive the management of Surrey's waste up the waste hierarchy, support the achievement of net self-sufficiency in the management of Surrey's waste, promote resource efficiency, contribute to the identified shortfall in C,D&E waste management capacity, make effective use of previously develop land and provide employment for 9 full-time members of staff.
175. The proposal would have some localised landscape impacts including in relation to the landscape quality and tranquillity of the SHNL and its setting. However, given the context of the application site and with the imposition of planning conditions to safeguard existing trees, improve the appearance of the waste processing building, ensure the tarpaulin is properly maintained if its retention is deemed necessary, and control the hours and days of the operation, the harm is considered capable of being sufficiently reduced so that the landscape impact is acceptable and the SHNL and its setting are protected. This reflects the somewhat transitional character between the edge of Dorking and the countryside beyond, which has a history of commercial and industrial uses.
176. As no trees are proposed to be removed from the application site, the application would not result in any impacts on nesting birds and roosting bats. Ecological enhancements and tree protection measures have been proposed by the applicant. Officers are therefore satisfied that the application would not harm biodiversity and ecological interests and would make provision for biodiversity net-gain.
177. However, the CHA has assessed the application on highway safety, capacity and policy grounds and recommend that the proposal be refused. This is due to the existing access being too narrow to accommodate two-way HGV movements, visibility being compromised at the proposed access, particularly for right turning vehicles onto Ranmore Road and left turning vehicles into the private access track, and potential highway impacts where the private access track meets the public highway due to pedestrian access and suitable footways not being prioritised. The CHA has found this particularly concerning given the proximity of the proposed access to the primary school and pedestrians walking to the station. These concerns over the suitability of the proposed access and highway safety are shared by MVDC and the district council EHO.

178. Whilst the air quality impact of the development on the surrounding area would not be significant, the CAQC has recommended that further information is provided before the application is determined. This is in relation to clarification as to whether the impact of vehicle movements has been taken into consideration and the submission of a Dust Management Plan. Whilst this information has been requested from the applicant, no further information has been submitted to date.
179. The proposed development has been found to be unacceptable due to the lack of information provided in the submitted NIA and the adverse impact of the proposal on the adjoining sand school and stables premises from intrusive noise which has not been suitably mitigated. In addition, the EA has recommended that planning permission is refused. This is because as no contamination assessment has been submitted and minimal drainage information has been provided, it has not been demonstrated that the risks of pollution to controlled waters are acceptable or can be appropriately managed.
180. Part of the application site, in respect of a section of the proposed access track, is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposed development therefore constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt, which should only be approved in 'very special circumstances'. Having identified the harm that the development would cause to the openness of the Green Belt together with any other harm, Officers do not consider that there are sufficient very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.
181. Officers acknowledge that the proposal would provide a relatively minor increase in capacity for the recycling of C,D&E waste in Surrey for which there is an identified need and contribute to the sustainable management of Surrey's waste. There would be some localised impacts on the landscape, the AGLV and the SHNL and its setting although this is not considered to be unacceptable subject to the imposition of conditions. The proposal would also protect ecological interests and provide for an element of biodiversity net-gain. However, the CHA and the EA have recommended that planning permission should be refused. The CHA has advised that the adverse transport impacts of the proposal are not capable of being mitigated. The EA has expressed concern that it has not been demonstrated that the risks of pollution to controlled waters are acceptable or can be appropriately managed. Further, the application would result in unacceptable adverse impacts in relation to noise and air quality.
182. Taking the above findings into consideration, Offices consider that the overall benefits of the development would be insufficient to outweigh the harm caused to communities and environment and that planning permission should be refused.

## ***Recommendation***

The recommendation is that planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, which is partially located in the Metropolitan Green Belt, constitutes inappropriate development by definition. The use of this Green Belt land to provide access to the site would not preserve openness. Insufficient very special circumstances are considered to exist to outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and other identified harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to paragraphs 152 and 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, Policy 9 of

the Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020 and Policy EN1 of the draft Mole Valley Local Plan 2021.

7

2. It has not been demonstrated that there is safe and adequate means of access to the highway network, that the development is or can be made compatible with the transport infrastructure and the environmental character in the area and that vehicle movements would have an acceptable impact on highway safety contrary to the requirements of Policy 15 of the Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020, Policy CS18 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009, 'saved' Policy MOV2 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 and Policy INF1 of the draft Mole Valley Local Plan 2021.
3. It has not been demonstrated that the application would have an acceptable impact on communities and the environment in respect of public amenity and safety in relation to the impacts caused by dust, fumes and air quality and that the adverse impacts caused by dust will be mitigated or avoided contrary to the requirements of Policy 14 of the Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020 and Policy EN12 of the draft Mole Valley Local Plan 2021.
4. It has not been demonstrated that the application would have an acceptable impact on communities and the environment in respect of public amenity and safety in relation to impacts caused by noise or that the impacts on existing noise-sensitive uses can be acceptably mitigated, contrary to the requirements of Policy 14 of the Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020 and Policy EN12 of the draft Mole Valley Local Plan 2021.
5. It has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency that the application would have an acceptable impact on communities and the environment in respect of public amenity and safety in relation to the impact on the water environment including impacts on the quality of ground water resources and drinking water supplies resulting from the release of contaminated run-off from the site contrary to the requirements of Policy 14 of the Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020, 'saved' Policy ENV67 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 and policies EN12 and INF3 of the draft Mole Valley Local Plan 2021.

### **Informatives:**

1. In determining this application the County Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant by: assessing the proposals against relevant Development Plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework including its associated planning practice guidance and European Regulations providing feedback to the applicant where appropriate, and issues of concern have been brought to the applicant's attention in a timely manner affording the opportunity to consider whether such matters can be suitably resolved. This approach has been in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023. However, in this instance, it has not been possible to resolve the issues of concern so as to overcome the harm as identified in the reasons for refusal. The County Planning Authority has, however, set out within its report, the matters considered necessary to overcome the reasons for refusal which may lead to the submission of a more acceptable scheme in the future. The County Planning Authority is willing to offer pre-application advice in respect of any revised proposal.

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7

### ***Background papers***

The deposited application documents and plans, including those amending or clarifying the proposal, and responses to consultations and representations received, as referred to in the report and included in the application file.

For this application, the deposited application documents and plans, are available to view on our [online register](#). The representations received are publicly available to view on the district/borough planning register.

The Mole Valley District Council planning register entry for this application can be found under application reference MO/2023/1833.

### ***Other documents***

The following were also referred to in the preparation of this report:

#### ***Government Guidance***

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

[National Planning Policy for Waste](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance](#)

#### ***The Development Plan***

[Surrey Waste Local Plan 2020](#)

[Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009](#)

[Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 \('saved' policies\)](#)

[Dorking Town Centre Area Action Plan 2012](#)

[Draft Mole Valley Local Plan 2020-2027](#)

#### ***Other Documents***

The Waste Framework Directive 2008 (as amended)

Surrey Waste Capacity Needs Assessment 2023

Designing and Modifying Residential Streets: Manual for Streets 2007

Surrey County Council Guidelines for Noise and Vibration Assessment and Control 2020

BS: 4142: 2014 Method for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound

Noise Policy Statement for England 2010

The Surrey Hills Management Plan 2020-2025

Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015

Environment Act 2021

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